CHAPTER 14. COINS, SHELLS, PIPES, AND OTHER ITEMS

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This chapter describes an array of items—coins, shells, pipes, nails and tacks, crystals, unique objects, botanical remains—that do not fit neatly into artifact assemblages organized around function and use, or material, manufacture, and age.

The first part of the chapter provides a profile of the burials with these items. The items are described in detail in 14.B. Information is provided about recovery, condition and treatment, chain of custody, methods of analysis, and where relevant, findings about manufacture, origin, and age. Burials with possible floral tributes are discussed in 14.C.

14.A. Burials with coins, shells, pipes, and other items

Twenty-six individuals, approximately 7% of the excavated burials, were directly associated with coins, shells, pipes, and other items.[1] Three other individuals had items for which provenience is considered tenuous. The burials are listed in Table 14.1. Burials where the association was problematic are denoted with an asterisk.

Eleven of these burials have been assigned to the Late Group, three to the Late-Middle Group, nine to the Middle Group, and three to the Early Group. The items may have been personal possessions and/or were placed with the deceased by friends and relatives. Examples of similar objects and placements from Africa and the African Diaspora will be discussed in 14.B.

Nearly half of the graves included here were considered to be from the post-1776 period of the cemetery. Although the numbers are small overall, there is some suggestion of a shift in practice toward people being buried with items such as coins, knives, or pipes. As explained in Chapter 9, Late Group burials probably occurred during the period of the British occupation of New York, when fugitives from distant places (including the city's hinterland and colonies further south) made their way to the town; or from the period following the war, when the town's population probably included many relocated/ displaced persons. We therefore consider it possible that burial practices from the later years of the cemetery reflect diversity based on regional differences.

[1] The total used here is 376 burials, a count that includes burials for which, at a minimum, the presence/absence of a coffin and *in situ* skeletal remains could be determined clearly.

Table 14.1.
Burials with coins, shells, pipes, and other items

Burial	Age (years)	Sex	Group	Items	Location in grave
*15	11 - 18	undeter-mined	late	metal fragment from an ox shoe	Above right leg (next to builder's trench); association with burial unclear
22	2.5 - 4.5		mid	shell	Adjacent to left clavicle
48	adult	undeter-mined	early	knife	Location not recorded
*55	3 - 5		mid	calcite crystal	Found during cleaning of skeletal remains
135	30 - 40	male	late	2 copper coins, mica schist fragment	1 in left eye socket, 1 on right shoulder; mica schist found during cleaning of remains
138	3 - 5		late	4 metal tacks	1 at coffin headboard, 1 at right foot; 2 unknown (found during cleaning of skeletal remains)
147	55 - 65	male	late	cluster of small copper-alloy rings (7)and pins (4)	Between right humerus and ribs
158	20 - 30	male	late	pipe bowl fragment	Adjacent to right femur
165	adult	undeter-mined	late	pipe stem and bowl	Near left arm
186	0 - .17		late	unidentified iron object (possible nail)	Left side of the cranium
197	45 - 55	female	late	tacks	2 in area between the ankles; 3 from unrecorded location
214	45 - 55	male	late	coin, knife	Coin and knife near left forearm
217	17 – 19	male	late	peach pit	On coffin lid.
230	55 - 65	female	late	2 coins (1 with textile fragments attached)	1 above left mastoid process; location of other not recorded
239	1.5 - 3.5		mid	nail	Near right side of head
242	40 - 50	female	late	2 coins	Eye sockets
289	5 - 9		lmid	quartz disc	Unknown; found during cleaning of skeletal remains
310	44 - 52	female	mid	tacks	Between lower legs
*313	45 - 55	male	late	2 coins (missing from lab)	Beneath the head (excavation notes altered)
328	40-50	female	mid	broken pot	Coffin lid
340	39.3 - 64.4	female	early	pipe	Beneath the pelvis
348	1 - 2		mid	shell with nail	Coffin lid
352	adult	male	lmid	shell with iron object	Coffin lid
365	adult	female	mid	shell and metal object	Coffin lid
375	16 - 18	female	mid	clay ball with copper-alloy band, surrounded by cloth or leather	Right side of right femur/pelvis
376	45 - 65	male	lmid	coral	Coffin lid
387	34 - 44	male	early	oyster shells	Coffin lid
405	6-10		mid	shell and nail	Found during cleaning of cranium
410	adult	female	mid	glass sphere	Not recorded; found during cleaning of skeletal remains

14.B The coin/shell/pipe/other item assemblage

Recovery, condition and treatment, chain of custody[2]

Most items were observed during field excavation of the skeletal remains and were photographed and/or drawn *in situ* prior to removal. The crystal cluster from Burial 55, the quartz crystal from Burial 289, and the amber-colored glass sphere from Burial 410 were recovered during cleaning of the skeletal remains. The condition of the items ranged from excellent to structurally unstable. Treatment varied accordingly, with an effort to avoid invasive procedures.

Staff of John Milner Associates took an initial series of color slides of some items, including the ox shoe from Burial 15, the coins, the clay ball from Burial 375, smoking pipes, and the rings from Burial 147. However, due to their multivalent nature, some of the items described here were not immediately recognized as deliberate placements, and were afforded less attention. A second series of photographs (color slides and 35mm black-and-white) was taken in 1998, but neither the slides nor the negatives from the second series were salvaged after the collapse of the World Trade Center.

Laboratory technicians with the Howard University Archaeology Team reexamined the assemblage from 1997 through 1999 and in 2001. Jon Abbott took final, high-quality photographs in August 2001, after which most items were packed by the Bronx Council of the Arts and shipped by Artex to its art storage facility in Landover, Maryland. Some artifacts were left in New York at the World Trade Center laboratory, and were lost on September 11, 2001.[3] The items stored at Artex were re-inventoried by the Army Corps of Engineers in 2003, and returned to New York that September, where they were placed in coffins for reburial the following month.

Coins

Copper-alloy coins were found in direct association with four individuals: two men (Burials 135 and 214) and two women (Burials 230 and 242).[4] All of the burials with

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[2] John Milner Associates supplied information about conservation and treatment (see LaRoche 2002).

[3] Unless otherwise noted, all artifacts were recovered and reburied in the coffins of the individuals with whom they were originally associated. Artifacts that were lost from the World Trade Center will be noted in the text.

[4] Another coin was recovered from a disturbed context, apparently construction fill, within the grave shaft of Burial 259, a Late Group interment of a young adult, probably a woman, aged seventeen to nineteen years. This coin was similar to those recovered from the four burials mentioned. It was not re-interred and has been retained with the grave shaft fill artifact collection. Yet another coin was noted in the grave shaft of Burial 276, a coffin-less Late Group burial of a woman between twenty and twenty-four years, well above the level of the human remains; however, the laboratory did not catalog a coin from this burial. An inventoried copper-alloy button from an uncertain context was probably misidentified as a coin in the field notes. This item was not included with burial artifacts because it did not appear to be associated with the deceased; furthermore, it was not recovered after the collapse of the World Trade Center. Finally, a coin was mentioned in field notes for Burial 328, in disturbed soil that could not definitely be associated with the interment. This coin was cataloged as part of the non-burial-ground assemblage and was destroyed

copper coins were from the Late Group, and all were adults with ages estimated between thirty and sixty-five years. The African Burial Ground sample is small, but the fact that coins were found exclusively in Late Group burials of older adults suggests that the custom of placing coins on the eyes of the dead may have been adopted toward the latter part of the 18th century, and reserved for individuals at the upper end of the life cycle.

In addition to the coins found in these four burials, two silver coins may have been observed in association with Burial 313, a Late Group interment of a man between forty-five and fifty-five years old. However, no coins from this burial were brought to the conservation laboratory, and the section of the original excavation records describing the coins and their location was erased. The records may have been altered because no coins were present; on the other hand, the erasure may have been intended to conceal their discovery. *In situ* drawings and photographs do not depict coins in association with Burial 313.

All of the recovered coins were of copper alloy and were severely worn and corroded, with surface features no longer visible to the naked eye. Initial identifications were based solely on coin diameters. None of the coins was pierced. Coins were desalinated and mechanically cleaned with care in case surface features were extant. They were examined by eye and under magnification, but no features were perceptible. One of the coins from Burial 135 was examined further, as we explain.

The thirty-to-forty-year-old man in Burial 135 appeared to have been laid out with a copper coin over each eye. One coin (Catalog #880-B.001) was found *in situ* in the left eye socket (Figure 14.1) and the other coin (Catalog #880-B.002; Figure 14.2) lay above

Figure 14.1. (left)
In situ photograph of Burial 135, showing copper coin (Catalog #880-B.001) in left eye socket. Scale is in inches. Photograph by Dennis Seckler.

Figure 14.2. (right)
Coin, copper George II halfpenny.
Burial 135, Catalog #880-B.002.
Diameter 30 mm.
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

along with the rest of that collection on September 11, 2001. It was identified in the 290 Broadway inventory as a George II halfpenny.

the right shoulder, and probably had fallen from the right eye socket. Excavators noted that cloth and hair were preserved on the coins. The coin from the left eye was X-rayed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Figure 14.3) and surface features (e.g., the left-facing profile) were identified as those of a George II halfpenny, dating between 1727 and 1760. The other coin was too degraded to identify, but may also have been a George II halfpenny. The coins were approximately the same size and were both of stamped manufacture. This grave also contained a fragment of mica schist that appeared to have been a deliberate inclusion within the burial (see the "Other items" section).

a. b.

Figure 14.3.
a. X-ray of coin from Burial 135. Copper George II halfpenny, obverse. Catalog #880-B.001. Diameter 30 mm. The left-facing profile and legend are faintly discernible on the surface of the excavated coin. X-ray by Metropolitan Museum of Art, supplied by John Milner Associates.
b. Example of a 1749 George II halfpenny from the numismatic collection at the University of Notre Dame Libraries. Source: Jordan (1998).

The forty-five-to-fifty-five-year-old man in Burial 214 had a single copper alloy coin situated between his left pelvic area and forearm. The coin (#1191-B.003; Figure 14.4) was cast rather than stamped and its identification as a George II halfpenny is qualified at best. It differed in size from the two coins in Burial 135. A knife handle found with the coin is discussed in the "Other items" section.

Figure 14.4.
Coin, copper alloy.
Burial 214, Catalog #1191-B.003.
Diameter 23 mm.
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

Burial 230 held a woman between fifty-five and sixty-five years of age who was interred with two cast copper-alloy coins of markedly different sizes. The larger coin (Figure 14.5) measured 29 millimeters in diameter, and was found just above the left zygomatic arch, having probably slipped from her eye during or after her interment. The smaller coin (Catalog # 1216-B.001) measured 22 millimeters in diameter, and its exact provenience was not recorded in the field notes. Fragments of textile had adhered to either side of this coin. The coin may have slipped from the right eye into her burial garb, or it may have been inside a pocket or a cloth purse buried with the woman.

Figure 14.5.
Coin, copper.
Burial 230, Catalog #1216-B.003.
Diameter 29 mm.
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

The two cast copper coins associated with the woman in Burial 242 had retained their positions at her eyes. The coin from her right eye measured 27 mm in diameter (Figure 14.6; Catalog #1229-B.001) and the one in her left eye measured 26 mm (Figure 14.7). The woman was between forty and fifty years of age when she died. She wore a copper-alloy ring with glass insets on her right hand (see Chapter 13).

Figure 14.6. (above)
Coin, copper, from right eye.
Burial 242, Catalog #1229-B.001.
Diameter 27 mm.
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

Figure 14.7.
In situ photograph of Burial 242, showing a copper coin in the left eye socket (Catalog #1229-B.002) and immediately beneath right eye socket (Catalog #1229-B.001). Scale is in inches. Photograph by Dennis Seckler.

Copper pennies and halfpennies were probably the most common denominations circulating among captive Africans and other poor and marginalized people. The economic activities that enabled African New Yorkers to acquire clothing, ornaments, or extra food involved not just barter of services or goods, but also outright purchase with exchange of currency.

The coins found at the African Burial Ground appear to have been common issues circulated in colonial New York after 1729. The only definitively identified coin, the British George II halfpenny from Burial 135, was produced in large quantities from 1729 to 1754. George III halfpennies, similar to the George II coin, were minted from 1770 to 1775.

The placement of coins with the dead is known from various western ethnohistoric contexts. In Europe and its North American colonies, corpses were sometimes buried with coins meant as fares across the River Jordan (Coffin 1976:76). This practice appears to have been adapted from the Greek tradition documented in Virgil's *Aeneid*, of placing coins in the mouths of the deceased as payment to Charon, the ferryman who conveyed souls across the River Styx to their postmortem domain. Coins were placed on the eyes of the deceased in England and other European countries well into the 20th century (Roberts 1989:194-195). The placement was usually attributed to a need to hold the eyes closed for aesthetic reasons, but was probably rooted in the traditional belief that unless their eyes were weighted firmly shut, corpses would look for someone to accompany them into death (Coffin 1976:97; Richardson 2000:19; Frazer 1886:71).

Some African-American burial practices included the placement of coins (or coin analogues) with the deceased. The custom of burying the dead with coins was observed in excavated cemeteries with 18th and 19th century contexts, including St. Anne's churchyard in Annapolis, Maryland, and the First African Baptist Church cemetery in Philadelphia (Jones 2001; Parrington et al. 1989). Eight individuals at the latter cemetery had coins; most were found near the heads of the deceased (Parrington et al. 1989:75). No coins were found (in the eyes or elsewhere) in 18th century burials excavated at Newton Plantation in Barbados (Handler and Lange 1978:201, 318), but evidence exists from other areas of burial with coins in more recent times. For example, excavation at a cemetery for enslaved Africans on Montserrat uncovered at least one burial that included a single "metal disc [that] may have acted as a token or fee for the return of the deceased's spirit to Africa" (Watters 1994:64). As at the New York African Burial Ground, coins were placed on the eyelids, in the hand(s) or pocket, scattered inside the coffin, or left on the grave surface. West African Ashanti burials observed in the 20th century included parcels of gold dust "tied in the loincloth of the dead" (Habenstein and Lamers 1963:218), a finding that is not inconsistent with the African Burial Ground coins that appeared to be pocketed. A pierced silver coin, probably worn on a string, was noted in at least one burial in the 19th century Cedar Grove cemetery in Arkansas (Rose 1985:75); this coin appeared to have been a protective amulet worn during life. As in European-American cemeteries, coins at the African Burial Ground may have served dual, multivalent purposes: both the pragmatic (closing of the deceased's eyes) and the spiritual.

Shells and coral

Many of the grave shafts at the African Burial Ground held fragments of clam and oyster shell in the soil matrix, but in some burials, whole or partial shells were observed in positions suggesting deliberate placement in the grave. Burials in which the shell inclusions seemed deliberate were Burials 22, 348, 352, 365, and 387 (although the provenience of the latter was problematic).

The mechanical excavation, as well as recent and historical construction at the African Burial Ground, obliterated the surfaces of many graves, including those that may have offered insights into spiritual practices of 17th and 18th century Africans in New York. The material that can be clearly associated with the burials, however, dovetails neatly with some West and West Central African practices as well as those known from the Diaspora (see Vlach 1978; Thompson 1983). The shells at the African Burial Ground may have been placed as symbols of the deceased's passage through water to the spirit world and to represent his or her new identity as an ancestor. Clams and oysters were native to the waters surrounding New York, and the shells would have been easily acquired for placement on coffins.

A fragment of local hard-shell clam was found in Burial 22, a Middle Group burial of a child between two-and-a-half and four-and-a-half years old. The shell's position near the left clavicle (Figure 14.8) may indicate that the shell was strung and worn as a necklace, much like the adornment on the infant and child in Burials 226 and 254 (see Chapter 13). The shell fragment was lost and presumed destroyed on September 11, 2001.

Figure 14.8.
Burial 22 *in situ*, showing fragment of hard-shell clam above the left clavicle.
Photograph by Dennis Seckler.

Three coffins had lid artifacts that consisted of both a shell and a piece of iron, which appeared to be deliberate placements. A clamshell fragment and an iron nail were recovered from the lid of Burial 348, a Middle Group interment of a child between one and two years old. The objects lay slightly to the left side of the hexagonal coffin near the shoulder break, corresponding to the child's upper torso area (Figure 14.9). The shell lay atop the nail, covering it completely. Both artifacts were lost and presumed destroyed on September 11, 2001.

Figure 14.9.
In situ photograph of Burial 348 coffin lid, showing clamshell fragment (catalog #1702-CL) near coffin's left shoulder break. Excavators found an iron nail (Catalog #1702-CL.002) beneath the shell. Scale is in inches.
Photograph by Dennis Seckler.

Burial 352, a man of undetermined age assigned to the Late-Middle Group, had a whole oyster valve (Catalog #1719-CL) with an iron nail (Catalog #1719-CLA) on his coffin lid. This pair of artifacts was recovered from the coffin lid above the torso, much like the similar combination from Burial 348, which was located just a few feet to the east of Burial 352. This pair of artifacts was also destroyed on September 11, 2001.

Burial 365, the Middle Group grave of a woman of undetermined age, had another permutation of shell-and-iron-artifact assemblage on her coffin lid (Figure 14.10). In this case, the iron artifact was clearly not a nail, and instead of lying underneath the oyster shell, it curved around and nearly enclosed the shell. This oyster shell was of a different (although unidentified) variety than most of the oyster shells recovered from the African Burial Ground. This burial is further notable: in contrast to most of the burials at this site, the woman's head was oriented to the south rather than the west. This woman's skeletal remains may have been displaced (see Chapter 7). The shell and iron piece were both lost and presumed destroyed on September 11, 2001.

Figure 14.10.
Detail of *in situ* photograph of shell and iron artifact from coffin lid of Burial 365. Scale is in inches.
Photograph by Dennis Seckler.

The Early Group Burial 387, of a man between thirty-four and forty-four years, may also have had shell on the coffin lid, but the provenience is less certain. Field records referred to the presence of oyster shell, including whole upper and lower valves, without

specifying location in either text or drawing. Photographs of the coffin lid *in situ* show a whole oyster shell above the left femur. The shell was cataloged at the laboratory, but lost and presumed destroyed on September 11, 2001.

Another shell and nail were recovered during laboratory cleaning of the skeletal remains from Burial 405, a Middle Group grave of a child between six and ten years. The artifacts were both associated with the cranial bones, although labeling did not indicate whether they were found together or separately.

Unlike clam and oyster shell, coral was exotic to New York harbors.[5] Five specimens of coral were identified at the African Burial Ground, but only one appeared to have been deliberately included with a burial. It was recovered from the distal femoral area of Burial 376, a Late Middle Group interment of a man between forty-five and sixty-five years old. The specimen (Figure 14.11) was particularly large and may have been placed on the coffin lid at the time of burial. In keeping with the hypothesis that relics of the ocean may have been associated in multivalent fashion with Africa, the Middle Passage, and the spirits of the ancestors (Thompson 1983:135-38; Thompson and Cornet 1981:197-98; Vlach 1978:143), the coral's place of origin became a clue to its spiritual, as well as archaeological, meaning.

Figure 14.11.
Coral, *siderastrea sidereal.*
Burial 376, Catalog #1895-B.
Weight 190 g. Scale is in inches.
Photograph by Dennis Seckler.

In 1997, the coral specimen was examined by a series of researchers. The first investigator, Alan Harvey, Ph.D., Curator of Invertebrates at New York City's American Museum of Natural History, could not identify the species, as the sample was badly degraded and had lost its morphological structure. Subsequently the coral was analyzed by Steven D. Cairns, Ph.D., Curator of Stony Corals at the Department of Invertebrate Zoology at the New York Aquarium. He identified the genus, but species remained undetermined. On Dr. Cairns' advice, the coral specimen was sent to Ian G. Macintyre, Ph.D., Sedimentologist and Research Specialist in the Department of Paleobiology of the Smithsonian Institution and the Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C. Dr. Macintyre suspected that the coral may have been a fossil specimen when it was buried; thus he recommended that it be examined by Ann F. Budd, Ph.D. Dr. Budd is a Fossil Coral Taxonomist and Professor of Geology at the University of Iowa. Dr. Budd

[5] Several cowry shells, also exotic to New York waters, were included in the strand of beads encircling the waist of the woman in Burial 340. They are discussed in Chapter 13.D.

performed a thin section microscopy, which required that only a small sample of the coral be sacrificed, and determined that the coral was *Siderastrea sidereal*, an Atlantic species found mainly in the Caribbean, the Gulf of Mexico, and Bermuda. It occurs in a lesser degree along the Brazilian coast, in the Gulf of Guinea, and along the coast of West Africa. Since the analysis, the coral specimen has gone missing and may have been destroyed in the collapse of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

Pipes

Smoking pipes were found in direct association with skeletal remains in Burial 340, and in two cases that were less clear-cut (Burials 158 and 165).[6]

Figure 14.12.
Pipe, clay.
Burial 340, Catalog #1651-B.134.
Bore diameter 6/64".
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

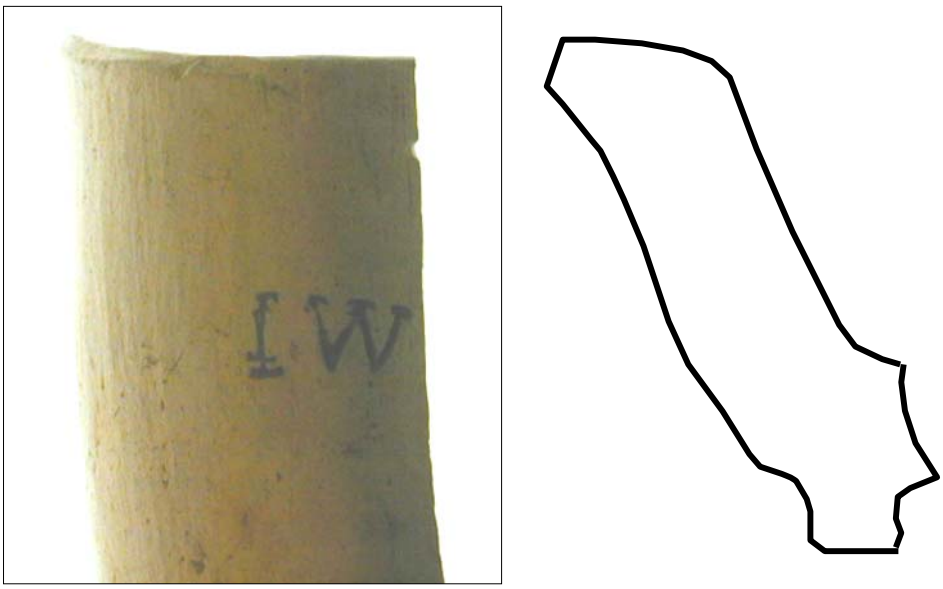
A whole, unused clay pipe was found in Burial 340, an Early Group interment of a woman between thirty-nine and sixty-four years of age. The pipe (Figure 14.12) was placed within her coffin, beneath her body at pelvis level. Although the pipe was unused, its surface was rough in places. Its form is comparable to those of British pipes of the 18th or early 19th centuries.[7] The pipe may have been a personal possession, but because it was unused, it may have been included as a talisman or a memento. The pipe was reburied with the woman's skeletal remains in October 2003. In addition to the pipe beneath her hips, the woman in Burial 340 was laid to rest with strands of glass beads around her right wrist and around her waist (see Chapter 13).

Burial 158 held the remains of a man twenty to thirty years old, assigned to the cemetery's Late Group. He was buried without a coffin, and a piece of a pipe bowl marked "IW" (Figure 14.13) was found adjacent to his right upper leg. Because only part of the bowl was present, this artifact may not have been a deliberately inclusion; however, the fragment could have been placed with the man because of the mark, suggesting that the lettering may have had some significance. Furthermore, the fragment

[6] Fragments of pipes were found in the grave shaft fill of 72 additional burials, and are considered likely to have been present in the soil matrix rather than placed deliberately in the shaft. Their presence in the soil suggests they may have been placed on some other burial at some point in time during the cemetery's use, but it cannot be determined with which individual they were originally associated. These items are listed in the artifact inventory in Appendix E. Most were lost in the World Trade Center collapse.

[7] Because pipes of this style spanned such a long period of manufacture, the pipe was not considered temporally diagnostic. Other evidence in this burial indicated that the grave was among the cemetery's Early Group; therefore, it is assumed that the pipe dated to the early side of this broad temporal range.

was positioned such that it may have been held in the hand at the time of burial. Six additional pipe stem and bowl fragments (with bore diameters between 5/64" to 7/64") were recovered from the grave fill in this burial. All of the pipe fragments were presumed destroyed on September 11, 2001. The man was buried wearing a matched set of gilt copper-alloy cuff links (see Chapter 12).



a. b.

Figure 14.13.
a. Pipe bowl, clay; detail showing 'IW" mark. Burial 158, Catalog #903-GF. Bored at 5/64". Photograph by Christopher R. DeCorse.
b. drawing of bowl shape.

Burial 165, a coffin-less Late Group burial of an individual whose age and sex could not be determined, contained an articulating pipe bowl and stem fragment, bored at 4/64", near the left forearm (Figures 14.14 and 14.15). This pipe was lost and presumed destroyed on September 11, 2001. Like the other pipes in direct association with burials here, this pipe appeared to be unused. The reason it was placed with the deceased is not known.

Unused pipes were found in burials at Seville Plantation village in Jamaica dating between 1670 and 1760, as well as in burials at the African settlement in Elmina, Ghana (Armstrong 1999:181; DeCorse, personal communication). Handler (1998) encountered at least one incidence of an undisturbed 18th century burial in Barbados in which whole, unused pipes were placed at the chest and pelvis. It is noteworthy that in all of these cases the pipes in the burials had yet to be smoked.

Pipe smoking was probably very common among African New Yorkers of both sexes. The habit can sometimes be identified archaeologically by the presence of pipe notch dentition—worn areas created by clutching a pipe stem between the upper and lower

Figure 14.14. (left)
In situ photograph of clay pipe stem and bowl near the left forearm.
Burial 165, Catalog # 919-B.
Scale is in inches.
Photograph by Dennis Seckler.

Figure 14.15. (right)
Pipe stem and bowl, clay.
Burial 165, Catalog # 919-B.
Bore diameter 4/64".
Photograph by Christopher R. DeCorse.

teeth. Pipe notches were noted in some individuals excavated at the African Burial Ground, though not in the three with whom pipes were apparently buried.

Clay smoking pipes were ubiquitous throughout the American colonies in the 17th and 18th centuries. They were mass produced in both England and the Netherlands, shipped overseas, and sold inexpensively throughout the colonies. Tobacco was smoked in West Africa by the late 16th century, and millions of pipes were shipped there as well during our period, mainly from Dutch suppliers but also from England and Rouen (Alpern 1995:26-27). Dutch pipes predominate in West African archaeological assemblages dated before the 19th century (DeCorse 2001:164). Doubtless there were smokers among the captives brought to New York, as well as among those born in the Americas.

Pipes can be dated by shape, decoration, and makers' marks (and statistically by bore diameter if large numbers are in the sample).[8] The pipes recovered from Burials 158, 165 and 340 were typical of the 18thcentury and were all probably of English manufacture, but exact dates and makers cannot be assigned.

The pipes and pipe fragments recovered in association with skeletal remains and from grave shaft fill were examined by Christopher R. DeCorse at the World Trade Center laboratory in 1998. Specimens that were possibly diagnostic or that were found in direct association with skeletal remains were brought to Syracuse University for further analysis. A complete inventory was made, and diagnostic pieces were photographed.

[8] Stem bore diameters of fragments from all contexts yielded a mean date of 1764. See Appendix E.

Subsequently, the pipes were returned to the World Trade Center laboratory, and those that were clearly in direct association with skeletal remains were prepared for reburial in August 2001.[9] These were shipped to the Artex facility in Landover, Maryland, at that time. They were placed in coffins and reburied in October 2003.

Other items

The historical contexts for acquisition of copper alloy pins, buttons, and personal adornment items are discussed in Chapters 11, 12, and 13. These contexts pertain to the pins and small rings found with Burial 147, the banded ball found with Burial 375, and the glass sphere found with Burial 410. Each of these items or components may have been obtained through typical channels of purchase, gift, recycling, or appropriation, then reused and recontextualized, either by the deceased during their lifetime or by whoever prepared the body for burial.

The identification of some objects as talismans either belonging to the deceased or bestowed upon them at death is speculative but reasonable. Bundles or caches of pins, buttons, crystals, smooth stones, and other items excavated at domestic sites have been interpreted by archaeologists as conjuring items, medicinal or protective charms, or other *minkisi*-type religious paraphernalia of African derivation (see Brown and Cooper 1990; Kelso 1984; Patton 1992; Russell 1997; Wilkie 1997; Leone and Fry 1999; Paynter et al. 2005; for an introduction to African systems of divination, see Peek 1991). Such caches may have been intended to identify the deceased, communicate with the spirit world, or as offerings to ancestors and spirits.

Burial 147, in which a bundle of pins and tiny rings were found together, poses the strongest argument for this practice, although other burials may have contained non-surviving organic items placed with spiritual intent, as well as surviving materials not obviously recognizable as spiritual in intent. The identification of such items is complicated by their contexts: common household items were reused and imbued with meanings not envisioned or deciphered by manufacturers or slaveholders. The practice remained hidden to European eyes, but surely was discernable to Africans.

Clay ball with copper-alloy band

Burial 375 contained a small ceramic ball (presumably a marble) with an embossed copper-alloy band wrapped twice around its circumference (Figure 14.16). It is one of the most interesting and unusual artifacts found at the African Burial Ground (see Chapter 5 for a photograph of the burial and an *in situ* drawing of the object). This Middle Group grave held the remains of a woman between sixteen and eighteen years old. She had been placed directly in the ground with no coffin, with her arms crossed

[9] Pipes from grave shaft fill contexts remained in the laboratory, but were not salvaged after the collapse of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

above her head and her legs extended. At her right hip was a mass of cloth or leather containing the ball. The soil immediately surrounding the object was not sampled. The omission makes it impossible to ascertain whether the ball was part of an assemblage of material that included botanical, faunal, or mineral elements. Such assemblages are usually contained within bundles, bags, or other wrappings, and are well known in African American ethnographic and historical accounts. No comparable artifact has been documented in the literature.[10]

Figure 14.16.
Sphere with band, ceramic and copper alloy.
Burial 375, Catalog #1886-B.001.
Diameter 17 mm.
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

Cluster of rings and pins

Burial 147 was a Late Group grave of a man between fifty-five and sixty-five years old, buried with a group of straight pins and small copper-alloy rings (Catalog #0893-B.004) between his right humerus and ribcage (Figure 14.17). Four pins, three of which were precisely aligned along the arm bone, and fourteen rings were counted during excavation; many of the observed fragments were too deteriorated to remove, and it is probable that many of the pieces were not collected. Although the field drawing clearly shows fourteen rings, conservators recovered only enough fragments to reconstruct an arbitrary seven rings, each measuring 11 mm in diameter (Figure 14.18). The fragments were stabilized chemically and by mounting on a linen backing (LaRoche 2002).

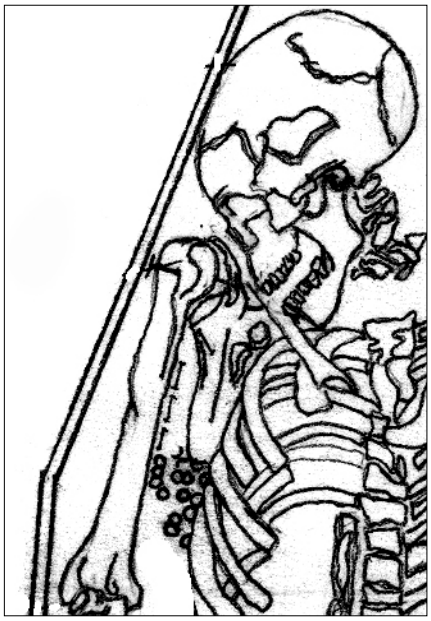


Figure 14.17.
Detail from *in situ* drawing of Burial 147, showing three pins aligned along the inside of the right humerus, an adjacent pin on the and a cluster of copper-alloy rings between the upper arm and the ribcage. Scale: 1 inch = 6 inches. Rings measured 11 mm in diameter. Drawing by M. Schur.

[10] Spheres have been recovered from African American archaeological sites such as the W.E.B. DuBois birthplace in Great Barrington, Massachusetts (Paynter et al. 2005), although the copper banding is unique to this artifact. The 20 mm diameter ceramic marble from the DuBois site was of a type produced in Europe in the 18th century, and may have been chosen for its "magic" or spiritual properties

At the time of burial, the rings were probably enclosed in a cloth pocket or sack pinned to the sleeve of the man's burial garment (see Chapter 11 for a discussion of shrouding). The group of pins and rings is considered a possible talisman or conjuring bundle of some kind.[11] No soil samples were collected from this part of his body; thus it could not be determined whether textile fragments or botanical remains were a part of the cache.

Figure 14.18.
Rings, copper alloy.
Burial 147, Catalog # 0892-B.004.
Diameter 11 mm.
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

Concealing amulets on the body was (and is) a documented practice in many African cultures and in the Diaspora. Handloff (1982:186-189) noted the practice both historically and at the present in the Ivory Coast, including a reference to protective bracelets worn on the upper arms. During the 19th century Asante warriors wore armbands called *kapo,* which were akin to *bansare* armbands worn in spiritual practice (McCaskie 2000).

Glass sphere

A tiny, amber-colored glass sphere (Figure 14.19) was recovered during laboratory cleaning of the skeletal remains from Burial 410, a Middle Group burial of a woman of unknown age. The exact location of the sphere was not recorded. The object was not perfectly spherical, and may have been from a piece of jewelry, although no evidence of a setting was noted with this burial.

Figure 14.19.
Sphere, glass.
Burial 410, Catalog #2082-B.001.
Diameter 3.44 mm.
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

[11] The assemblage calls to mind a "luck ball," well documented in African-American contexts (Hyatt 1935:799, Puckett 1926:229-234). Luck balls have been common forms of conjuration for many years, and are well known among present-day Africans and African-Americans as well (Handloff 1982:186-87, 189).

Knives

Two individuals, from Burial 214 and Burial 48, had parts of knives in association with their remains.

Burial 214, a Late Group grave of a man between forty-five and fifty-five years, held a bone or antler and iron knife handle about 8.5 centimeters long in close association with a single copper coin (see description and photograph of coin). Both artifacts were recovered from his left pelvic area or forearm, perhaps indicating that they were enclosed in a pocket (Figures 14.20 and 14.21). Douglas Armstrong's excavation of house-yard burials at Seville Plantation in Jamaica also found an example of a man, presumed to have been a captive plantation worker, buried with a knife in his left hand, perhaps similar to the placement of the knife in Burial 214 (Armstrong 1999:181; Armstrong and Fleischman 1993).

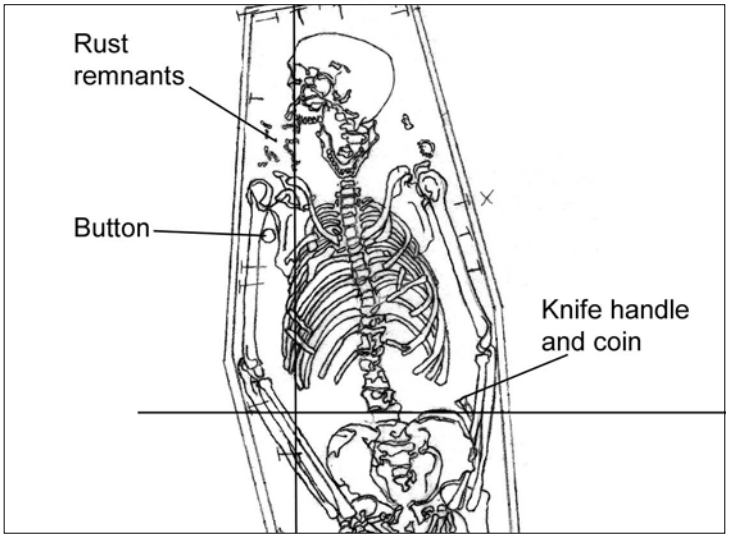


Figure 14.20.
In situ drawing of Burial 214 showing artifact locations. North is to the right. Scale: 1 inch = 1 foot. Drawing by M. Schur.

Figure 14.21.
In situ photograph of knife handle (Catalog #1191-B.005) and coin (Catalog #1191-B.003) from the left pelvic/forearm area of Burial 214. The coin is visible above the right side of the knife handle, lying on a fragment of coffin wood. Scale is in inches. Photograph by Dennis Seckler.

Conservators did not treat the knife handle, as it had been collected and sent to the laboratory along with the coffin nails. The handle was of bone or antler, the shank of iron (Figure 14.22).

Figure 14.22.
Knife handle, bone or antler and iron.
Burial 214, Catalog #1191-B.005.
Length 85 mm.
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

A knife blade was found in association with Burial 48, an Early Group grave of an adult of undetermined age. It was originally identified as a probable nail, but the X-ray revealed a likely blade (Figure 14.23). The item was not salvaged following the collapse of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

Figure 14.23.
X-ray of knife blade, iron.
Burial 48, Catalog # 620-CHC.
Shown actual size.
Provided by John Milner Associates.

Calcite crystal, quartz disc, and mica schist fragment

Laboratory personnel found a very small calcite crystal (Figure 14.24) while cleaning the skeletal remains from Burial 55, a Middle Group interment of a child between three and five years. The crystal was forwarded to the conservation staff, then to the American Museum of Natural History, where Mr. Sydney Horenstein identified it as non-local calcite. The nearest sources of similar crystalline calcite are north of Kingston, New York, or west of the Delaware River. It is also possible this crystal originated elsewhere,

perhaps outside of North America. It is not possible to know whether the item was placed with the deceased or contained in the grave fill soil.

Figure 14.24.
Crystal cluster, calcite.
Burial 55, Catalog # 0792-B.003.
Width 3.5 mm.
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

A quartz disc (Figure 14.25) was recovered during laboratory cleaning of the remains in Burial 289, a Late-Middle grave of a child between five and nine years. Because the disc was found in direct association with the skeletal remains, it was probably deliberately placed in the child's grave. According to laboratory technicians, the stone appeared to have been cleaved rather than flaked; however, the flat, round shape may be the result of intentional modification rather than natural occurrence. Small stone or ceramic pieces were sometimes shaped into discs for use as game pieces; such items have been recovered archaeologically from colonial-era sites with an African presence, including the Broad Street site in New York City (Wall 2000) and the Isaac Royall House in Medford, Massachusetts (Royall House Association 1994). Alternatively, the disc may have been from a piece of jewelry, perhaps like the glass and wire filigree ornament found with the infant in Burial 186 (see Chapter 13).

Figure 14.25.
Disc, rose quartz.
Burial 289, Catalog # 1321-B.004.
Diameter 7 mm.
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

A small mica schist disc was recovered in the laboratory from within the soil pedestal of Burial 135, a Late Group interment of a man between thirty and forty years of age. The circular piece measured 6 mm in diameter. Although it was very small and its exact provenience was not recorded, the disc may have been a game piece or perhaps a "flash" placed for its reflective quality symbolic of water. In addition to the mica disc, Burial 135 held two copper coins, which were probably set over each eye. The multivalent secular-plus-spiritual purposes of the coins on the eyes reinforce the possibility that the mica disc may have been intended to attract the attention of African spirits.

Figure 14.26.
Disc, mica schist.
Burial 135, Catalog #880-B.
Diameter 6 mm.
Photograph by Jon Abbott.

Crockery

A large piece from a salt-glazed stoneware vessel with a blue spiral design was found on the lid of the hexagonal coffin in Burial 328, a Middle Group burial of a woman between forty and fifty years of age. The portion of the site where she was interred was apparently cleared by backhoe to the tops of coffins, damaging them and compromising the 18th century-era ground surface. Nonetheless, this vessel fragment appeared to have been deliberately placed on the coffin lid, approximately level with the shoulder break. This area would have been directly over the woman's upper torso. There is abundant ethnohistorical, ethnographic and archaeological evidence for this practice from West and West Central Africa (see Agorsah, Blakey and Perry 1999:5-7; David 1992:197; DeCorse, 1999:148; DeCorse 2001:101, 155, 157, 189; Denbow 1999:405) and from mainland North America (Deetz 1999: 206-210; Jamieson 1995:49-51; Schuyler 1972:26; Brown 2001:90; Gundaker 2001:130; Thompson 1983:184; Thompson and Cornet 1981:76-94, 182-85; Vlach 1978:139-145).

Figure 14.27.
In situ photograph of vessel fragment, stoneware.
Burial 328, Catalog #1589.
North is at the top.
Photograph by Dennis Seckler.

Sherds from similar pots with identical designs were common in the grave fill and in the industrial features throughout the southeastern portion of the African Burial Ground. Therefore, we are reasonably certain that the pot was produced by the Crolius-Remmey potters on Pot Bakers Hill (see Plates F.21 and F.29 in Appendix F). The stoneware pot

from Burial 328 was missing at the time of the final African Burial Ground artifact inventory; it was not included in the analysis of the local stoneware from grave shafts and was never photographed in the laboratory.

As mentioned, a copper-alloy coin was recovered from a disturbed context within this burial (see footnote 4). A fragment of kiln furniture was also found in the burial, lying directly on the lumbar vertebrae.

Nails and tacks

Nails and tacks that did not appear to be from coffin construction were found with four individuals: Burials 138, 186, 197, and 310. The individuals represented in these burials had all been buried in coffins, and their interments spanned the Middle, Late-Middle, and Late temporal groups. Three of the burials with non-coffin nails and tacks were of infants or young children, and two were of relatively older (within this population) women.

Burials 197 and 310, both women in their forties or fifties, were buried in overlapping coffins adjacent to or crossing the projected fence line. The field drawing for Burial 310, a Middle group interment, illustrates seven tacks[12] between the proximal tibiae, loose but not widely scattered. Four tacks were identified in the laboratory, cataloged, and ultimately reburied with the woman's remains. Six other iron artifacts, listed as possible multiple tacks, were set aside to be X-rayed, but were lost on September 11, 2001. The woman in this grave also wore a copper-alloy ring with glass insets on her left hand (see Chapter 13), and was positioned with her right arm crooked as though holding a child, although no other skeletal remains were present in the grave.

The field drawing for Burial 197, a Late Group interment, showed two small round iron objects placed rather precisely between the ankles. Laboratory personnel cataloged three possible tack fragments, which were lost on September 11, 2001, and thus not X-rayed for definitive identification; it is presumed that these three fragments included the two from the ankles.

Burial 138, a Late Group interment of a child between three and five years, held four tacks scattered throughout the coffin: one at the headboard, one at the right foot, and two found during laboratory cleaning of the skeletal remains.

An iron artifact, tentatively identified as a nail, was recovered from the left side of the cranium of Burial 186, a Late Group interment of a neonate or very young infant. The nail was in a provenience inconsistent with the coffin's construction (although it could have become displaced during the coffin's decomposition). The infant's head was also adorned with a glass disc set in a filigree of copper alloy (see Chapter 13).

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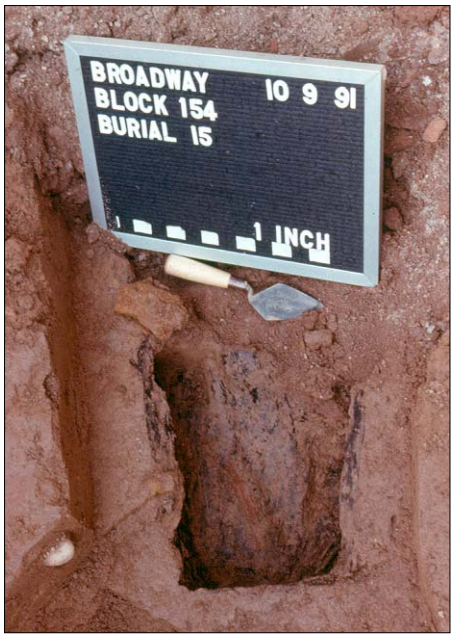
[12] The exact count was uncertain because several iron pieces, believed to have been tacks, had rusted together into an unidentified mass. This accumulation was slated to be X-rayed, but was lost on September 11, 2001.

Conservation treatment was limited to desalination and, in some cases, X-rays. After this processing, the tacks were forwarded to the Howard University laboratory.

Ox shoe

An iron mass later identified as a partial ox shoe or horseshoe was recovered from a somewhat unclear provenience in Burial 15, a Middle Group burial of a child or adolescent between eleven and eighteen years old. The artifact was found adjacent to the remains of the right leg; however, this grave had been disturbed and the skeletal remains truncated by later foundation construction, and the artifact lay at the interface between the grave and the construction trench (Figure 14.28), making the association of individual and artifact tentative at best.

Conservators cleaned the artifact in deionized water and removed some corrosion with a petroleum-distillate sequestering agent. X-rays revealed the item more clearly (Figure 14.29). The drawing based on the X-rays (Figure 14.30) depicts a morphology that is consistent with either an ox shoe or a horseshoe. It is similar to examples of horseshoes dating to the 17th through mid 18th centuries (Noël Hume 1969:238) and to ox shoes recovered from Revolutionary War encampments in the New York area (Calver and Bolton 1950:218-19). One of the rectangular holes still contained a hand-wrought nail.



Horseshoes are a frequent component of grave surface decoration, and examples are known from African-American contexts in the 19th and 20th centuries. In addition to this association with the grave, horseshoes are commonly used as "lucky" devices among Europeans and European-Americans as well as African-Americans.

Figure 14.28. (left)
Ox shoe, iron (adjacent to trowel handle at left side of photograph). North is to the right.
Burial 15, Catalog #0286-UNC.001.
Photograph by Dennis Seckler.

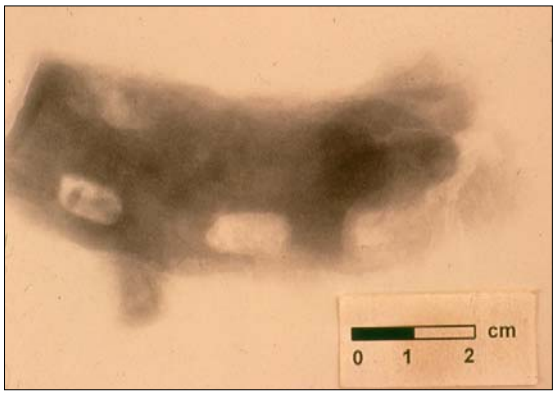


Figure 14.29.
X-ray of ox-shoe, Burial 15, Catalog #0286-UNC.001.
Provided by John Milner Associates.

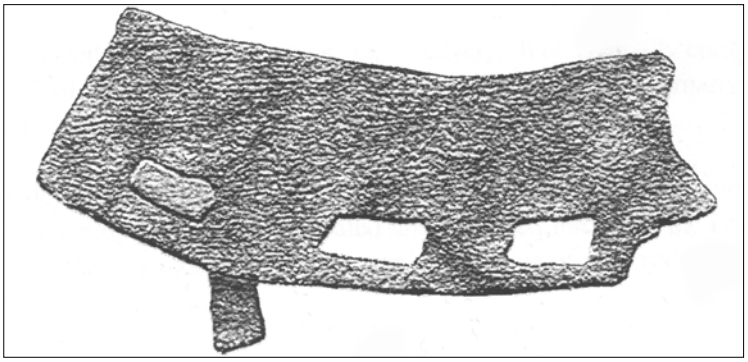


Figure 14.30.
Drawing of ox shoe, Burial 15. Length is 3.5 inches.
Drawing by C. LaRoche and R. Schultz.

Peach pit

Excavators recovered a peach (*Prunus persica*) pit from the coffin lid of Burial 217, a Late group grave of a young man between seventeen and nineteen years old. The pit was collected in a wood sample and not noted in the field records, so excavators may have mistaken it for part of the coffin wood.

The pit was probably a deliberate inclusion rather than intrusive. It is unlikely that peach trees grew on the site during its tenure as a cemetery, since neither the pollen nor macro-botanical analyses turned up any other evidence of this species at the site. The grave fill shows no evidence of household dumping in the immediate vicinity, and the pit was directly upon the coffin lid.

Peach pits are a common component of African American conjuration bundles. Their use has been documented in the southern U.S. (Puckett 1926:437; Ruppel et al. 2003:326).

14.C. Possible floral tributes

Results of the analyses of pollen and macro-plant remains from selected soil samples are presented in Appendix G. Here we summarize the possible evidence for flowers having been placed in graves as a component of funerary observance, based on the presence of pollen from flowering species. Table 14.2 lists the burials for which such evidence is

considered. Macro-plant remains (seeds) recovered from flotation or in the field have not been analyzed as possible evidence for flowers.[13]

Table 14.2.
Burials with possible floral tributes

Burial	Age (years)	Sex	Group	Pollen evidence (Appendix G.2)
45	2.5 – 4.5	undeter-mined	mid	Pollen of throw-wax, Queen Anne's Lace, honewort.
115	25 – 35	female	mid	Honewort.
151	35 – 45	male	late	Honewort.
194	30 – 40	male	late	Chicory-type (Liguliflorae) pollen. This bouquet may have been gathered at the cemetery itself.
210	35 – 45	male	late	Honewort.
270	adult	male	mid	Honewort.
392	42.5 – 52.5	male	lmid	Honewort.

Several burials contained honewort *(Cryptotaenia canadensis)* pollen in the stomach soil samples. The variety that grows in the New York area is not widely utilized for medical purposes; therefore it is most likely evidence of floral tributes placed in or on the coffins. Honewort may have grown wild at the burial ground and could have been gathered there.

Burials that contained high relative percentages of honewort pollen included Burial 45 (a Middle Group grave of a very young child), Burial 115 (a Middle Group grave of a woman between twenty-five and thirty-five years), Burial 151 (a Late Group grave of a man between thirty-five and forty-five years), Burial 210 (another Late Group grave of a man between thirty-five and forty-five), Burial 270 (a Middle Group burial of an adult man whose age was not determined), and Burial 392 (a Late Middle burial of a man in his early forties to early fifties who was laid head-to-east in a rectangular coffin, wearing breeches and possibly a shirt).

Honewort flowers between June and September, which suggests that these burials took place during the summer months. Most were of men who were middle-aged for their time. It is possible there was a preference for inclusion of flowers in the burials of older men.

Burial 45, a Middle Group interment of a child between two-and-a-half and four-and-a-half years old, contained an assortment of pollen species that included honewort, thorow wax *(Bupleurum rotundifolium)*, and several genera of carrot family *(Apiaceae)* pollen,

[13] Seeds that were observed and recovered during excavation (as opposed to those recovered by flotation) were never identified as to plant species—they were lost in the destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Pollen was analyzed for soil samples from only 28 graves, including 62 total samples from coffin lid, stomach-area, and control samples. Distinct spectra between control and either lid or stomach-area samples was considered as possible evidence that plants had been placed with the deceased (or had been ingested). A full explanation of the methods and results of palynology is in Appendix G.2.

which probably included Queen Anne's lace *(Datura carota)*. These species are all flowering plants that grow wild in the New York City vicinity. Based on the flowering season of the plants represented here, the child probably died during the summer.

Burial 194, a Late Group grave of a man between thirty and forty years, contained a comparatively high level of chicory-type (*Ligulaflorea*) pollen in the soil samples taken from the stomach and lid areas. The pollen may have been associated with the consumption of chicory leaves, which resemble dandelion greens, shortly before death. However, since plant pollen is associated with flowers rather than leaves, it seems more likely that it represents a floral tribute, perhaps gathered at the cemetery and placed on the coffin at burial.[14] Chicory-type plants are common wildflowers that inhabit a range of areas and soil conditions that were probably present at the site. If the pollen recovered was from a floral tribute, the deceased most likely was buried sometime between May and September, when this species normally blooms. This burial is also notable for the cedar plank attached to the coffin headboard as a grave marker (see Chapter 9).

[14] It is assumed that coffins were already sealed when they arrived at the burial ground; thus, if the plants were gathered at the site, they must have been placed *on* rather than *in* the coffin. The high pollen content in the stomach area may have been from grains that filtered downward as the coffin and soft tissue decomposed.